

White Paper  
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Digital Publishing Institutes: Authoring and Editing Digital Humanities Scholarship  
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# Authoring and Editing Digital Humanities Scholarship White Paper

KairosCamp (KCamp) is the colloquial name for a group of workshops sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities' Institute for Advanced Topics in Digital Humanities initiative. These workshops were held for authors and editors to learn more about digital scholarship production and digital publishing, specifically with an eye towards digital humanities and scholarly multimedia projects. The camp is named after the most longstanding and leading digital journal in writing studies, *Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy* (<http://kairos.technorhetoric.net>), which publishes peer-reviewed webtexts that are designed to enact their arguments. The word *kairos*, from the Greek, stands for the 'opportune moment' a rhetor has to persuade her audience using all available means of communication.

KCamp has two facets: (1) a two-week summer residency for authors learning to produce peer-reviewed digital humanities projects of any length for any venue type and (2) a two-day pre-conference workshop for editors learning to publish digital humanities-type projects. The website, <http://kairos.camp>, contains information for attendees of both workshops. The original grant narrative, with detailed information on the history of this form of scholarship and prior iterations of similar workshops, is also available on the KairosCamp website. The grant paid for lodging and catering for participants to attend either the author or editor workshops as well as travel for author-workshop participants. In addition, the grant covered personnel salary for the staff.

## Author Institutes

The residential author institutes were held in Morgantown, WV, at West Virginia University, where PI Ball was a faculty member. The first year of institutes, "From Concept to Prototype," was modeled as a beginners' workshop for 15 scholars of any rank or institution who had a research question, a work plan for or piloted data collection that should include media assets (i.e., so the project wouldn't simply be written/linguistic in design), and goals set for what they wanted to accomplish with the two-week institute. The syllabi included discussions of rhetorical and technical needs for projects—with many authors returning to their research questions and reframing or reshaping them based on intense workshops and feedback from the KairosCamp staff.

The staff comprised five senior scholars in rhetoric and composition studies, all of whom are affiliated via the editorial staff or review board of *Kairos*, which has published peer-reviewed hypertextual and scholarly multimedia content since 1996. In their academic positions, the KairosCamp staff are rhet/comp professors/lecturers who teach academic and technical writing, multimedia authoring, web and print design, digital editing and publishing, and related courses using a writing-process approach.

The second summer institute—“From Prototype to Published”—also took place in Morgantown, WV, and hosted 12 participants from across the U.S. One participant from the first summer returned for the second and continued work on his previous project; otherwise, all other participants, which included several teams of authors and technical experts, were new to KairosCamp in the second summer. The goal of this more “advanced” workshop was to help authors get as close to submission/publication as possible, but the staff realized that the concept of “advanced” was subjective depending on a project’s staffing, research question, data collection levels (which were of higher/more complete standard for the advanced workshop in the proposal process), type of project (article-heft vs. stand-alone project vs. enhanced monograph-ish), and publishing venue or home institutional support mechanisms. In many cases, authors in the second institute also needed to return to their research questions for reformulation, which adjusted the outcomes of their KairosCamp and project deliverables in more rhetorically or technologically sustainable ways.

In both workshops, we offered a variety of lecture + hands-on lessons on conceptual thinking about one’s project and connected those to technical workshops on HTML, CSS, Javascript, Git, Markdown, command line work, and optional sessions tailored for individual or small groups of users. Readers can find the syllabi on the KairosCamp website. With an average ratio of 3 participants for every instructor, there was ample time for individual and small group help during the two weeks, so that participants were able to leave with significant movement forward on their projects and created work plans for continuing that work upon leaving Morgantown.

## Takeaways

- **More beginner workshops are needed.**
  - Reason #1: We had far fewer submissions for the advanced workshop than anticipated, which required reaching out to university presses and digital humanities centers working with authors whom we could solicit to attend. Our take-away from the lesser number of applicants, in part based on a pre-survey we asked participants of both author institutes to take, was that they didn’t *feel* very advanced, even if their projects were farther along than the beginner workshop projects. We ended up with 12 participants in the advanced workshop instead of 15 in the beginner (with a much larger applicant pool). The staff discussed initiating beginner and advanced tracks at the second author camp to admit more participants, but we decided not to do this because we didn’t want to split the staff’s attention across two tracks, which would impact the participants’ experience negatively.
  - Reason #2: Authors need more support on the rhetorical aspects of their projects. By ‘rhetorical aspects’, we mean simply asking authors basic rhetorical questions about their projects: Who were they designing for? For what purpose/intention? What media did they have or need to enact such an argument? How would that argument succeed (or not) given a research question that was created inherently for scholarly multimedia, not print-based, presentation? What was the impact they hoped for their project? Where would they publish their projects, and how would

that impact their academic accountability needs? Etc. For the beginner workshops, some authors entirely recrafted their research questions based on days and days of group and individual meetings with the staff. This restructuring inevitably led to more focused, completable, and sustainable projects. For the advanced workshops, we expected to dive into the technological aspects by the middle of the first week of the workshop, but we ended up extending the rhetorical aspects throughout the workshop in a more concentrated way because even more ‘advanced’ projects needed rethinking/reframing of their research questions in relation to their technological choices, media assets, and sustainability plans.

- **More scholars of color are needed in DH project leadership.**
  - Both years of the author institute saw a dearth of applications from scholars of color, with the advanced workshop receiving none from identifiable scholars of color. We tried to solicit several scholars working on semi-advanced stages of DH projects, but none could attend at short notice. Of course, this isn’t a DH-specific problem, and a significant area of need is additional mentoring and support systems for scholars of color beyond recruitment strategies, which should never solely be the point. Innovative projects, deep and inventive collaborations, and research questions derived from intersectional lives and theories are key for the continued importance of the digital humanities. Scholars of color should be given space to contribute more effectively to this area of knowledge and discovery that observes nonstandard forms of scholarship amidst standardized academic expectations. It’s an uphill battle, but it’s one we want to push on and support.
- **More library-support discussions and collaborations are needed.**
  - As the location for most universities’ DH support, libraries are central to the production and sustainability of most scholars’ digital humanities projects. Libraries are also most well-equipped to begin hosting peer-reviewed publishing venues for DH-like research, in the form of collaborating with university presses working on digital scholarly monographs, such as University of Michigan and University of Minnesota, and eventually hosting their own library-run journals for scholarly multimedia content. Through digital scholarship librarians or centers, this work is happening in strategic and structured ways. (This point is debatable, given the research in this area, but libraries certainly offer better social/human and technical infrastructures for digital publishing than individual scholars and even disciplines can.) At KairosCamp, we offered one session on working with your home institution’s libraries/librarians with guest librarians as speakers. In addition, both years included at least one librarian as a participant (beginner level) or participant–observer (advanced level, and a librarian from the institution that next wants to host KairosCamp—Wayne State University). However, we believe a better balance can be had to provide infrastructural support to scholars during and after these institutes by bringing more librarians onto the staff.

## Editor Institutes

The KairosCamp editor institutes were held in May and June 2018 at the Library Publishing Forum and Association of University Presses respectively. These two-day institutes brought in publishing staff, from both libraries and university presses primarily, but also a few historical society and small institute publishers. We had 15 publishers accepted to KairosCamp on a first-come, first-served basis, with free registrations managed by the conference hosts in both cases. While we could have easily hosted a two-week workshop for publishers on the editorial vagaries of scholarly multimedia, we recognize that their time-availability is much more limited than that of scholars, who can more easily take two weeks away for a hands-on workshop during the summer months.

The focus of these institutes was to help prepare publishers to support peer review, copyediting, production, and preservation of digital scholarly texts, such as enhanced and interactive digital monographs, digital humanities projects, and journals. Each of the learning modules from the editors' institute included hands-on portions, such as practicing peer review and code/design-editing skills using a sample webtext in production with *Kairos*. The KairosCamp staff, which included four senior editors from *Kairos*, introduced the history of scholarly multimedia that has been published in the humanities for the last 25 years, almost exclusively in independent journal venues like *Kairos* and start-up presses such as Computers and Composition Digital Press. Larger university presses began this type of publishing in earnest, for the most part, in 2015, when University of Michigan Press published its first interactive book in the Digital Rhetoric Collaborative series (e.g., *Digital Samaritans*) and Stanford University Press published its first digital humanities project-monograph in 2016 (e.g., *Enchanting the Desert*). Although earlier versions of enhanced or scholarly multimedia monographs exist at university presses such as Duke and NYU, they are demos or pilots by nature and don't exist within a larger press infrastructure for scholarly multimedia production and publishing.

We address the issue of where these publications have appeared from the outset of the editors' workshops, explaining to participants *why* much of this work comes out of independent and disciplinary-hosted venues, as well as (more recently) library publishing units that include digital humanities projects, instead of university presses<sup>1</sup>. This is necessary since much of the workshop focuses on examples-at-hand from *Kairos* or related publications the staff had access to. Feedback from participants at the two editor institutes varied according to whether they were library publishers, who have historically leaned more towards journal publishing and thus were more familiar and comfortable with our approach to using the *Kairos* journal as an example. On the other hand, university press publishers, who have historically leaned more towards monograph publishing, seemed less comfortable or familiar with our journal-based

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<sup>1</sup> The short answer is that the scholarly, social, and technical infrastructures for publishing media-based research have been home-grown and one-off endeavors that university presses have not had the resources to support until very recently; see e.g., Eyman & Ball, 2014, available as a pre-print for free at <http://ceball.com/2013/07/11/digital-humanities-scholarship-and-electronic-publication/>. Please contact the authors for a proof copy, if desired.

examples. We received similar feedback in 2018 from NEH IATDH reviewers who questioned why independent journal editors were offering and why university presses were *not* offering these kinds of workshops. We are cognizant that many reviewers' and university press publishers' understanding of the landscape of scholarly multimedia is limited: It's an area of publishing that has been underground for decades and only recently has gained prominence with large UPs taking up the call, often through Mellon Foundation-supported grants for personnel and platform building. Folks not involved directly in those projects might be aware of the growth of scholarly multimedia, but they don't necessarily know where or how it's being published. So, the assumption that university presses are ready and willing to offer research-lifecycle workshops on proposing, authoring, designing, revising, reviewing, editing, publishing, and preserving scholarly multimedia (or DH projects that fall outside the university press publishing structures) is a premature request for a set of actors still in a nascent-to-them area of academic publishing.

## Takeaways

- **More research needs to be published on the history of scholarly multimedia.**
  - As mentioned above, there is some confusion from participants and stakeholders alike in the histories of scholarly multimedia publishing, histories which are both deeper (in time) and more specific (in disciplinary and venue uptake) than most stakeholders are aware. Much of the research on scholarly multimedia rests in the publication lists of a very small number of scholars (Anderson, Ball, Eyman, Kuhn, McPherson, etc.), and their articles, presentations, and similar informal scholarly media outputs don't often discuss the long history of this work or are published in venues outside of those that digital scholarship/publishing librarians or university press editors read. In addition, there is a disconnect between publications on scholarly multimedia and digital humanities projects, the latter of which is usually authored by DH researchers writing about their own cases or librarians writing about the technical and info-structural aspects of this work—again, not about its histories, or how these two areas of research are connected through semiotic media assets. A third component to this disjuncture is with the relationship to library and archive's digital collections. All three of these items can fall under an umbrella category of digital scholarship that is much bigger than that phrase initially signals, and yet is still a subset of it that relies specifically on media-forward meaning-making.
- **More guidelines needed for editing scholarly multimedia.**
  - We pointed to several online, open-access resources for editing digital scholarship, and a few on scholarly multimedia, but the sense of the room was that it would be more helpful to provide these as a single-location compendium, with additional materials that supplement where existing resources fall short in guidance on the multimedia formats of scholarly publishing.
- **Maintain unique workshops for libraries and presses?**
  - This take-away has a question mark accompanying it since we only ran each editor workshop once, but the idea behind it is that with the differing objectives of library publishing (most of which have access-first policies) versus press publishing (which

favor commercial or at least non-profit business models), the audiences require slightly different approaches in learning about scholarly multimedia. As we consider how to offer these editing institutes again, we will consider partnering with folks from Stanford or Michigan, and possibly also University of Minnesota so that we can approach our press audience with more staff who can speak directly to their perspectives.